

A
SPEECH

M A D E

By the right Honourable

I O H N

Earle of BRISTOLL

In the high Court of

PARLIAMENT

May 20. 1642.

Concerning an ACCOMMODATION.

TOGETHER,

With the Votes of both Houses of Parliament.



LONDON, Printed for J. Smith, and A. Coe. 1642.

Digitized by John, 1st Earl of Bristol (1580-1653) A

SPEECH MADE BY

The right Honourable *J O H N* Earle of
Bristoll, in the high Court of Parliament.

May, 20. 1642.

MY LORDS,

I Have spoken so often upon the subject of Accommodation, with so little acceptance, and with so ill success, that it was in my intention not to have made any further essay in this kinde; but my zeal to the peace and happiness of this Kingdome, and my apprehensions of the neer approaching of our unspeakable miseries and calamities, suffer me not to be master of mine own resolutions.

Certainly, this Kingdome hath at all times many advantages over the Monarchies of *Europe*. As, of Situation, of plenty of rich commodities, of Power both by Sea and Land: But more particularly at this time, when all our neighbouring States are, by their severall interests, so involved in Warre, and with such equality of power, that there is not much likelihood of their mastering one another, nor of having their differences easily compounded. And thereby, we being onely admitted to all trades, and to all places: Wealth and Plenty (which ever follow, where trade flourisheth) are in a manner cast upon us.

I shall not trouble your Lordships by putting you in minde of the great and noble undertakings of our Ancestors: Nor shall I passe higher then the times within mine own remembrance.

Queen *Elizabeth* was a Princess disadventaged by her Sex, by her age, and chiefly, by her want of Issue: yet if we shall consider the great effects which were wrought upon most of the States of Christendome by this Nation under her prudent government; (The growth of the Monarchy of *Spain* chiefly by her impeached; The United Provinces by her protected; The *French* in their greatest miseries relieved; Most of the Princes of *Germanie* kept in high respect and reverence towards her and this Kingdome, and the peace and tranquillitie wherein this Kingdome flourished; and which hath been continued down unto us by the peaceable government of King *James* of blessed memory, and of his now Majesty, un-

all these late unhappy interruptions) We cannot but judge this Nation equally capable, with any other, of Honour, Happinesse, and plentie.

Now, if in stead of this happy condition, in which we have been, and might be, upon a sober and impartiall inquirie, we shall find our selves to have been for some few yeares last past, involved in so many troubles and distractions, and at the present to be reduced to the very brink of miseries and calamities; It is high time for us to consider by what means we have been brought into them, and by what means it is probable we may be brought out of them.

This Kingdome never enjoy'd so universall a peace, neither hath it any visible enemy in the whole world either Infidell or Christian: Our Enemies are onely of our own house, such as our own dissentions, jealousies, and distractions have raised up: And certainly where they are found (especially betwixt a King and his people) no other cause of the unhappinesse and misery of a State need to be sought after: For civill discord is a plentifull Source, from whence all miseries and mischiefs flow into a Kingdome.

The Scripture telleth us of the strength of a little City united, and of the instabilitie of a Kingdome divided within it self; So that upon a prudent inquirie, we may assigne our own jealousies, and discords, for the chief cause of our past and present troubles, and of our future fears.

It must be confessed, that by the counsell and conduct of evill Ministers the Subject had cause to think their just liberties invaded: And from thence have our former distempers grown: For it is in the body politique of a Monarchy, as in another Naturall body, the health whereof is defined to be, *Partium corporis aqua temperies*, an equall temper of the parts: So likewise, a State is well in health and well disposed, when Sovereign power and common right, are equally ballanced, and kept in an even temper, by just and equitable rules.

And truly, (*My Lords*) by the goodnesse of his Majestie, and by the prudent endeavour of the Parliament, this State is almost reduced to that equall, and even temper, and our sicknesse is rather continued out of ignorance and conceipt (I mean feares and Jealousies) then out of any real distemper or defect.

I well remember, That before the beginning of this Parliament, some Noble Lords presented a Petition unto the King, and in that Petition did set down all or most of the grievances and distempers of the Kingdome, which then occurred to them. To these (as I conceive) the Parliament have procured from his Majestie such redresses as are to their good satisfaction.

Many other things for the ease, securitie, and comfort of the Subject, have been by their great industrie, found and propounded, and by his

the goodnesse condescended unto. And now we are come so neere the happines of being the most free and most settled Nation in the Christian world; Our dangers and miseries will grow greater and neerer unto us every day then other if they be not prevented.

The King on his part offereth to concurre with vs in the setting all the liberties and immunities either for the proprietie of our goods or libertie of our persons, which we have received from our aunccestors, or which himselve hath granted vnto us; And what shall yet remaine for the good and comfort of his Subjects, He is willing to hearken to all our iust and reasonable propositions. And for the establishing of the true protestant Religion, he wooes us to it: And the wisdom and industrie of the Parliamant hath now put it in a hopefull way.

The rule of his government, he professeth, shall be, The Lawes of the Kingdome, And for the comforting and securing of us he offereth a more large and more generall pardon then hath bin granted by any of his Predecessors

And truly (*My Lords*) This is all that ever was or can be pretended unto by us;

Wee, on the other side make profession; That wee intend to make his Majestie a glorious King, To endeavour to support his dignitie, and to pay unto him that duty and obedience, which, by our Allegiance severall Oathes, and late Protestation wee owe unto him, and to maintaine all his just Regalities and prerogatives, which I conceive to be as much as his Majestie will expect from us.

So that (*My Lords*) wee (being both thus reciprocally agreed of that which in the generall would make both the King and people happy) shall be most unfortunate, if wee shall not bring both inclinations and intentions so to propound and settle particulars, as both King and people may know what will give them mutuall satisfaction, which certainly must be the first stepp to the setting of a right understanding betwixt them. And in this I should not conceive any great difficulty, if it were once put into a way of preparation. But the greatest difficulty may seeme to be, how that which may be settled and agreed upon may be secured. This is, commonly, the last point in Treaties betwixt Princes, and of the greatest nicenesse, But much more betwixt a King and his Subjects, where that confidence and beliefe which should be betwixt them, is once lost: And to speake cleerely, I feare, that this may be our case, And herein may consist the chiefest difficulty of accommodation: For it is much easier to compose differences arising from reason, yea even from wrongs, then it is to satisfy jealousies, which arising out of the diffidence and distrust, grow and are varied upon every occasion.

But (My Lords) If there be no endeavors to allay and remove them, they will every day increase and gather strength; Nay, they are already growne to that height, and the mutuall replyes to those direct termes of opposition. What if we make not a present stay, it is to be feared, it will speedily passe further then verball contestations.

I observe in some of his Majesties Answers, a Civill Warre spoken of. I confesse it is a word of horror to me who have bene an eye-witnesse of those unexpresible calamities, that (in a short time) the most plentiful, and flourishing Countries of Europe have been brought unto by an intestine Warre.

I further observe, that his Majesty protesteth against the miseries that may ensue by a Warre; and that he is cleare of them. It is true, that a protestation of that kinde is no actuall denouncing of Warre, but it is the very next degree to it, *Ultima admonitio*, as the Civilians term it, The last admonition; So that we are upon the very brinkes of our miseries; It is better keeping out of them, then getting out of them: And in a State, the wisdom of prevention, is infinitely beyond the wisdom of Remedies. If for the finnes of this Nation, these misunderstandings should produce the least Act of Hostility, it is not almost to be beleaved, how impossible it were to put any stay to our miseries: For a Civill war admits of none of those Conditions, or Quarter, by which cruelty and blood are amongst other enemies kept from extremities; Nay, if it should but so happen (which God of his goodnesse avert) That mutuall Forces and Armies should be raised, Jealousies and Feares would be so much increased thereby, that any Accommodation would be rendred full of difficultie and length; and the very charge of maintaining them, (whilst first a cessation of Armes, and then a general Accommodation were in treating) the Wealth of the Kingdome would be consumed.

And of this we had lately a costly example. For in those unhappy troubles, betwixt us and Scotland, after there was a stop made to any further acts of Hostility, and a desire of peace exprest on both sides, Commissioners nominated, and all the Articles propounded, yet the keeping of the Armes together for our severall securities, (whilst the cessation at Rippon, and the peace at London were in treating) cost this Kingdome not much lesse then a million of pounds. And if two armies be once on foot here in England, either a sudden encounter must destroy one of them, or the keeping of them both on foot must destroy the Kingdome.

I hope therefore we shall make it our endeavour by moderation, and calmnesse, yet to put a stay to our so next approaching miseries, and that we shall hearken to the wise advice of our Brethren of Scotland in their

late Answer to the King and Parliament, wherein they earnestly intreat us, That all means may be forborne which may make the breach wider, and the wound deeper; and that no place be given to the evil Spirit of division, which at such times worketh uncessantly, and resteth not: But that the fairest, the most Christian, and compendious way may be taken by so wise a King and Parliament, as may (against all malice and opposition) make his Majesty and his Posterity more glorious, and his Kingdome more happy then ever. And in another place they say, That since the Parliament have thought meet to draw the Practice of the Parliament in Scotland into example, in Point of Declaration: They are confident that the affection of the Parliament will lead them also to the practise of that Kingdome in composing the unhappy differences betwixt his Majesty and them, and (so far as may consist with their Religion, Liberties, and Lawes) in giving his Majesty all satisfaction, especially in their tender care of his Royall Person, and of his Princely Greatnesse and authority.

Certainly (My Lords) this is wise and brotherly advice; and I doubt not but we are all desirous to follow it. Wee must not then dwell upon generals (For generals produce nothing) But wee must put this Businesse into a certaine way, whereby particulars may be descended unto; and the way that I shall offer with all humilitie, is, That there may be a select Committee of choice persons of both Houses, who may, in the first place, truly state and set downe all things in difference betwixt the King and the Subject, with the most probable wayes of reconciling them. Secondly, to descend unto the particulars, which may be expected by each from other, either in point of our supporting of him, or his relieving of us. And lastly, how all these Conditions, being agreed upon, may be so secured, as may stand with the honor of his Majesty, and the satisfaction of the Subject.

When such a Committee shall have drawn up the heads of the Propositions, and the way of securing them, they may bee presented unto the Houses, and so offered unto his Majesty by such a way as the Parliament shall judge most probable to produce an Accommodation.

(My Lords) What I have yet said unto you, hath bene chiefly grounded upon the apprehensions and feares of our future dangers. I shall say something of the unhappinesse of our present estate, which certainly standeth in as much need of reliefe and remedy, as our feares do of prevention: For, although the King and People were fully united, and that all men that now draw severall wayes, should unanimously set their hand to the worke, yet they would finde it no easie taske to restore this Kingdome to a prosperous and comfortable condition: If we

drain this Kingdome of men and treasure; if we consider the Debts and necessity of the Crowne, the engagements of the Kingdome, the great and unusuall contributions of the People, the which, although they may not be so much to their discontent (for that they have been legally raised) yet the burthen hath not been much eased: Let us likewise consider the distractions (I may almost call them confusions) in point of Religion, which of all other distempers are most dangerous and destructive to the Peace of a State.

Besides these publike calamities, let every particular man consider the distracted and discomfortable estate of his owne condition, for mine owne part, I must ingenuously professe unto your Lordships, That I cannot finde out, (under the different Commands of the King and the Parliament) any such course of caution and warinesse, by which I can promise to my selfe security or safety: I could give your Lordships many instances of the inconstancie and impossibilitie of obeying these commands: But I shall trouble you only with one or two.

The Ordinance of Parliament, now in so great agitation, commandeth all Persons in Authority, to put it in execution, and all others to obey it according to the Fundamentall Lawes of the Land: The King declareth it to be contrary to the Fundamentall Lawes, against the Subject, and Rights of Parliament, and commandeth all his Subjects of what degree soever upon their allegiance not to obey the said Ordinance, as they will answer the contrary at their Perils.

So likewise in Point of the King, commanding the attendance of others of us upon his Person, whereunto Wee are obliged by severall relations of our services and othes: in case we comply not with his Commands, Wee are liable to his displeasure, and the losse of those places of Honour and Trust, which Wee hold under Him: if Wee obey his Commands without the leave of the Parliament, (which hath not bene alwayes granted) Wee are liable to the censure of Parliament: And of both these we want not fresh examples. So that certainly, this cannot but be acknowledged to be an unhappie, and uncomfortable condition.

I am sure I bring with me a ready and obedient heart to pay unto the King all those duties of loyalty, allegiance, and obedience which I owe unto him: And I shall never be wanting towards the Parliament, to pay unto it all those due Rights, and that obedience which we all owe unto it: But in contrary Commands, a conformity of obedience to both, is hardly to be lighted on. The Reconciliation must be in the Commanders, and the Commands, and not in the obedience, or the person that is to obey. And therefore untill it shall please God to bless us with a right understanding betwixt the King and Parliament, and

a conformity in their commands, neither the Kingdom in public nor particular men in private can be reduced to a life or comfortable Condition.

I have said thus much to give occasion to others, to offer likewise their opinions; For if wee shall sit still, and nothing (tending to the stay of the unhappy Hill understanding betwixt the King and his People) be propounded. It is to be feared, That our miseries will hasten so fast upon us, that the season and opportunity of applying remedies may be past.

I have herein discharged my conscience, suitable to that duty which I owe to the King my Sovereigne and Master, and suitable to that zeale and affection, which I shall ever pay to the happinesse and prosperety of the Kingdome. towards which I shall ever faithfully contribute my humble prayers, and honest indeavours. And I shall no way doubt (whatsoever successe this my proposition may have) it will be accompanied with the good wishes of your Lordships, and of all peaceable, and well minded men.

ON Friday last, the Lords fell into consideration of the malignant party of the Kingdom, and of His Majesties intention to raise Arms against his Parliament, And having some while debated thereon, they at last unanimously Voted,

1. That it appears the King intends to levie war against the Parliament.

2. That whensoever the King make thwar upon the Parliament, it is the breach of the trust reposed upon him by the People, and against his Oath, and tending to the dissolution of his Government.

3. That whosoever shall serve or assist the King in such War, are Traytors, and to be proceeded against as Traytors according to the Statutes of 11. Rich. 2. and 1. Hen. 4.

Hen. Elsing. Cler. Parl. de. Com.